



M. JODI RELL  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT  
06106

To: Participants in the CHRO Advisory Group  
From: Jeff Beckham, Undersecretary, O.P.M  
Date: September 11, 2008  
Re: Notice of Meeting for CHRO Advisory Group

This is to give notice that a meeting of the CHRO Advisory Group is scheduled for Wednesday, September 17, 2008. The meeting will be held in Room 410 at the State Capitol.

The agenda for this meeting is attached to this notice.

Thank you.

cc: Office of the Secretary of State of Connecticut



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## **AGENDA**

### **Advisory Group on the CHRO, Diversity Law and Affirmative Action in State Agencies**

**September 17, 2008, 2:00 pm, Room 410, The Capitol**

1. Review of minutes of August meeting
2. Diversity law and policy subgroup recommendations
3. CHRO operations subgroup recommendations
4. Plan for final recommendations



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**Advisory Group on the CHRO, Diversity Law &  
Affirmative Action in State Agencies**  
**MEETING MINUTES – WITH CHANGES**  
for the June 25, 2008 Meeting

**PRESENT:** Debi Freund, Dawne Westbrook, David Metzger, Barbara Collins, Alice Pritchard, Stacy Walsh, Julie Evan Starr, Glenn A. Cassis, Sen. Eric Coleman, Teresa Younger, Fernando Betancourt, Jeffrey Beckham

**STAFF:** Adam Jeamel (Governor's Office)

**GUESTS:** Robert Brothers, Jr, Jim O'Neill

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**I. REVIEW OF MINUTES:**

Minutes reviewed and approved with no changes.

**II. CHRO OPERATIONS SUBGROUP:**

Based on comments from CHRO employees, staff, commissioners; practitioners who regularly appear before the CHRO; legislators and Advisory Group members, the CHRO Operations Subcommittee made a number of recommendations aimed at creating a CHRO that has an effective and qualified leader with authority to make decisions, deal with personnel issues, craft agency policy and agendas and be the public face of the agency. Some of the subcommittee's recommendations include some of the following:

- Converting the 9 unpaid volunteer commissioners into a Connecticut Advisory Council on Civil Rights who would provide guidance and advice to the CHRO Commissioner and the Governor. The functions of the current CHRO would be replaced with a single paid commissioner who is appointed by the Governor and three Deputy Commissioners for field operations/investigations, affirmative action and contract compliance and Counsel/Managing Director.
- Look into the effect on CHRO of pending legislation that would create a division of Administrative Law Judges and amending CHRO regulations to address withdrawal of complaints and release of jurisdiction letter after 150 days have passed since the charge was filed.



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- Instituting more training for investigators and creating more user-friendly procedures for filing charges of discrimination.

The proposal outlined by the CHRO Operations Subcommittee generated considerable discussion among Advisory Group members and representatives of the CHRO. The Subcommittee explained how their proposal takes into account the feedback from the current commissioners and others and said this may not be the best model but the model in place is not working effectively.

Bob Brothers said some of the recommendations have merit and deserve consideration. He said there are a number of things that are “broken” and a number of things that needed to be “fixed”. The CHRO’s current set up prohibits certain things from getting done.

Questions raised during the meeting include how can you make the commissioners more autonomous? Why don’t we find appointing authorities others than politicians for things like CHRO and Ethics? What do other states do for commissioners? Are any other states making greater progress than Connecticut when it comes to boards and commissions appointments?

Some of the issues discussed included effective management practices within the agency, accountability and autonomy of the commission.

The Advisory Group also raised the idea of having a vetting process – similar to Judicial Selection – to forward recommendations to the Governor for an appointment of CHRO Commissioners with staggered terms.

As the Subcommittee detailed the other recommendations, the Chairperson of the CHRO Advisory Group and other members of the Advisory Group discussed the feasibility and the support that might be out there for their recommendations.

It was decided that the Subcommittee would meet again to discuss some of the ideas raised during the June meeting, particularly the need for “independence” while holding the agency accountable.

The Advisory Group will attempt to get consensus on the CHRO Operations Subcommittee recommendations at the July meeting (postponed to August) and begin to address the proposals that will be unveiled by the other two subcommittees at the same meeting.



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### **III. NEXT MEETING:**

Wednesday, July 9, 2008 from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm (POSTPONED)

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 6, 2008 at 2:00 pm in Room 410 of the State Capitol.



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Advisory Group on the CHRO, Diversity Law &  
Affirmative Action in State Agencies  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
August 6, 2008

Present: Glenn Cassis, Teresa Younger, Michelle Duprey, Kia Murrell, Angela Rola, Debi Freund, Barbara Collins, David Metzger, Jeffrey Beckham, Alice Pritchard, Stacy Walsh and Dawne Westbrook

Staff: Adam Jeamel (Governor's Office)

Guests: Jim O'Neill, CHRO

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**I. REVIEW OF MINUTES:**

The minutes from the June 25, 2008 were approved with changes.

**II. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICES AND PROCEDURES SUBGROUP RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Affirmative Action Subcommittee, which includes Teresa Younger, Fernando Betancourt, Glenn Cassis, Debi Freund and Sharon Gaddy, outlined their recommendations for discussion among the full membership of the CHRO Advisory Group. The subcommittee's recommendations are based on conversations with the Association of Affirmative Action Officers.

The subcommittee's general recommendations include contracting with an outside firm to conduct an in-depth management and organizational assessment and audit of CHRO. The subcommittee emphasized that this was the perfect time to make changes before a new executive director was hired.

Their recommendations for Governor's Initiatives include maintaining the current structure as is until the findings of the assessment and an amendment to state statute 46a-52 when it comes to the appointment of the appointing authorities to define the skill sets necessary of CHRO Commissioners to ensure they have the background to be an effective commissioner.



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The first and second sentences of their second recommendation were considered problematic by some group members. They felt the two sentences made a “very strong statement” and there was question whether there was evidence to support it. The subcommittee said they were open to tweaking the first two sentences.

The subcommittee recommended that the Governor direct DAS to fulfill certain guidelines to ensure each agency has a viable upward mobility program. A question was raised as to whether it was a resource issue with DAS.

Their recommendation that the Governor study the need to establish an Office of Diversity Ombudsman created considerable discussion among group members. There were some bills proposed during the 2008 legislative session that addressed this issue. The group suggested that the recommendation be changed to the following: It is recommended that the Governor study the need of state AAOs.

The subcommittee said that a distinction must be made between the Human Resource professionals and AGDs. They added that an opinion should be requested from the Attorney General’s office on this matter (AG memo says that someone in your respective agency needs to an AGD but that person cannot be a human resources designee).

They also recommended that the statutes be revised to require CHRO to submit an annual report that is more than just a litany of numbers but rather a document that reflects the adverse impact and progress of diversity, growth and affirmative action – a comprehensive review of what’s going on.

Lastly, when it comes to recommendation for the Governor, the subcommittee said resource appropriations should be made so CHRO can fulfill its mandate and immediately address training needs.

The subcommittee also made recommendations to the CHRO so they can address the needs and concerns we have heard from third party sources and promote the “fluidity of the agencies processes.”

These recommendations include providing better technology for CHRO, Regulations Review should occur every five years, attention should be made to developing relationships and ongoing communication between Equal Opportunity Specialists and plan reviewers (discussion over this recommendation not going into enough detail), CHRO regulations be revised so that agencies with approved plans submit on a biennial basis, etc.



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### **III. NEXT MEETING:**

Wednesday, September 17, 2008 at 2:00 PM in Room 410 of the State Capitol.